

Grants Awarded to Improve Health Equity in Connecticut

Recipients will focus on gathering more and better data about race, ethnicity, and language preferences.

January 17, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

The Connecticut Health Foundation (CHF) awarded 24 [grants](#) totaling about \$1.7 million to several medical systems and health centers across the state to combat [health inequity](#).

Participating health systems will establish patient advisory boards, conduct community listening sessions and more to improve ways to collect and analyze data on patients' race, ethnicity and preferred language, also known as REL data. Improving ways to collect REL data is "critical to identifying and addressing population-level gaps in care and outcomes," according to a [CHF news release](#). Collecting these data is now required, according to a [2021 Connecticut law](#).

But proper collection of REL data is not as easy as it sounds. CHF noted that staff may require training to understand why asking about race and ethnicity is important and to learn how to explain to patients why they are being asked these questions.

Furthermore, CHF president and CEO Tiffany Donelson pointed out, "It's important that patients are asked the questions in a way they will feel comfortable answering." To that end, CHF gathered health care providers, state agencies and community organizations to help grantees work through issues related to data collection, a process facilitated by the Yale Equity Research and Innovation Center and the Yale Global Health Leadership Initiative.

"As health care providers begin asking about race, ethnicity and language preference on a more regular basis, it's important that patients are asked the questions in a way they will feel comfortable answering," Donelson said. "It's critically important for community members to be part of informing how this data is collected and how it's used. We're thrilled that so many health care providers are committed to implementing this new requirement in a thoughtful way."

CHF is Connecticut's largest independent health philanthropy dedicated to improving health outcomes for people of color. Since 1999, the foundation has awarded more than \$75 million to nonprofit organizations and public entities to improve health equity, reduce health disparities and expand health coverage and access to care.

To see the full list of grant recipients and the amounts awarded, [click here](#).

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